

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 18-24 are pending in the application.

The Examiner objected to the specification. The Examiner objected to Claims 1, 9 and 18 because of informalities. The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-3, 8-11, 16, 18, 19 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Brittan (U.S. Publication 2002/0184030). The Examiner has rejected Claims 4-7, 12-15 and 20-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Brittan in view of Lu (U.S. Patent 5,819,260).

Please amend Claims 1, 9 and 18 as set forth herein. Please cancel Claims 8, 16 and 24 without prejudice. No new matter has been added.

Regarding the objection to the specification, the Examiner alleges that specification does not provide support for the prediction algorithm recited in the claims. Applicants respectfully disagree. This issue was originally raised in a prior Office Action and addressed in the Amendment filed on October 24, 2007 wherein the specification was amended to recite, in the last paragraph beginning on page 6, “the rare sequence detector 201 can be programmed to predict, using a prediction algorithm, when a difficult word or word pair has been encountered. The prediction algorithm compares a calculated value with a threshold value and if the calculated value is less than the threshold value the word is determined as uncommon.” The specification now provides proper support for the claims.

Based on at least the foregoing, withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

Regarding the objection to Claims 1, 9 and 18 because of informalities, the Examiner states that “the text” lacks antecedent basis. Claims 1, 9 and 18 have been amended herein to address this issue.

Based on at least the foregoing, withdrawal of the objection to Claims 1, 8 and 19 is respectfully requested.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 1-3, 9-11, 18 and 19 under §102(b) the Examiner states that Brittan anticipates each and every element of the claims. Brittan discloses a speech synthesis apparatus and method.

Independent Claims 1, 9 and 18 have been amended to recite that if it is determined that an uncommon word exists in the text, a variable length pause is inserted before and after output of the synthesized speech of the uncommon word to offset the uncommon word from its surrounding speech, and at least one variable length pause is inserted within the output of the synthesized speech of the uncommon word to increase the duration of the uncommon word. Support for the amendments can be found in the Specification at page 8, lines 15-22.

Brittan discloses a system that operates by inserting pauses when it encounters a non-dictionary word or a capitalized word (proper name). The teachings of Brittan are exclusively limited to manipulating the text input to the synthesizer to achieve its ends. The system disclosed by Brittan is a binary flag system, that is, a given word either meets the criterion for additional pauses or it does not. In other words, Brittan teaches a system and method having a threshold for introducing a pause.

The claims of the present application relate to a system and method that accesses the text-to-speech (TTS) algorithm itself, which can produce a plurality of speech outputs and can choose the optimum one based on the complexity of the input text. The claims of the present application relate to a system and method that improves the perceptibility of TTS speech not only by offsetting particular words with pauses, but also by slowing the speech down by using longer segment durations, increasing the segment loudness, changing the pronunciation, or increasing the stress level. The present invention can dynamically adjust these features for each word. The language model of the present application assigns a complexity score to each word based on its context, and adjusts these features based on the complexity.

Brittan does not teach or discloses that if it is determined that an uncommon word exists in the text, a variable length pause is inserted before and after output of the synthesized speech of the uncommon word to offset the uncommon word from its surrounding speech, and at least one variable length pause is inserted within the output of the synthesized speech of the uncommon word to increase the duration of the uncommon word.

MPEP §2131 Anticipation, clearly states that to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim.

Based on at least the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1, 9 and 18 under §102(b), is respectfully requested.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 4-7, 12-15 and 20-23 under §103(a) the Examiner states that Luther in view of Lu et al. renders the claims unpatentable.

Claims 3-7, 11-15, 19-23 are believed to be in condition for allowance at least by virtue of their dependence on their respective amended independent claims.

Based on at least the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 3-7, 11-15, 19-23 under §103(a), is respectfully requested.

Independent Claims 1, 9 and 18 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Without conceding the patentability per se of dependent Claims 2-7, 10-15 and 19-23, these are likewise believed to be allowable by virtue of their dependence on their respective amended independent claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of dependent Claims 2-7, 10-15 and 19-23 is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, all of the claims pending in the Application, namely, Claims 1-7, 9-15 and 18-23, are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference or personal interview would facilitate resolution of any remaining matters, the Examiner may contact Applicant's attorney at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Musella", written over the printed name.

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